

DRAFT – FOR INTERNAL USE ONLY
COMMUNICATION STRATEGY
for the
CENTRAL FLORIDA PILOT RADIATION ASSESSMENT
March 2004

1.0 Introduction and Purpose

The Waste Management Division of EPA Region 4 plans to conduct a pilot radiation assessment in central Florida to identify and map areas with gamma radiation levels that exceed background levels. The assessment will cover approximately 60,000 acres, much of which is in Polk County with a small portion in Hillsborough County. The goal of the assessment is to rule out areas that do not pose a concern and to identify areas that may need further investigation.

The investigation will consist of a helicopter equipped with remote gamma radiation sensing technology flying over selected areas that were formerly mined for phosphate. The helicopter will fly in a grid pattern, 150 feet above the ground surface, at a speed of approximately 80 miles per hour. The flyovers will occur during daylight hours and will take about two weeks to complete.

Region 4 has contracted with the Department of Energy Remote Sensing Laboratory, in conjunction with the Argonne National Laboratory of Oak Ridge, Tennessee, to perform the assessment. The flyovers are scheduled to begin April 14, 2004.

This communication strategy recommends activities developed by a team of EPA staff members and contractors to inform community members and organizations about the pilot radiation assessment.



2.0 Scope and Objectives of Communication Strategy

The scope of this communication strategy is limited to providing information to key groups before and during the pilot radiation assessment. The radiation assessment is a pre-remedial, site assessment tool. In conjunction with the assessment, the EPA seeks to accomplish the following communication objectives:

- Inform key groups about the radiation assessment and explain how it will be conducted.
- Raise awareness and understanding of the purpose of the radiation assessment.
- Provide general information about potential exposure risks due to past phosphate mining activities in central Florida.

This communication strategy focuses on informing key groups, including elected officials and the media, in areas included in the radiation assessment. About two weeks before the assessment begins, EPA officials will visit with officials at the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the Florida Department of Health (DOH) to share information about the assessment. About one week before flyovers begin, the EPA will contact key community representatives, including elected officials and media in the assessment area, in writing, regarding the purpose of the assessment, when to expect the flyover in their community, and who to call for more information. Follow up contacts with these key community representatives will be made by telephone and electronic mail to insure that they receive information about the assessment before the flyovers begin.

3.0 Strategy Elements

This subsection identifies the key groups to whom information will be provided; methods for providing information and responding to inquiries; and the information to be communicated.

3.1 Key Groups

Public Officials

- Florida DEP.
- Florida DOH.
- Members of Congress who represent communities in the assessment area.
- State senators and representatives who represent communities in the assessment area.
- County officials: elected commissioners, county administrators, and emergency response agency directors for Polk and Hillsborough (primary contact); Manatee, Hardee, and DeSoto counties (secondary/courtesy contact).
- Elected officials and police/fire chiefs for cities and towns in the assessment area.
- Airports in the assessment area.

Organizations

- The Florida Phosphate Council.
- Florida Institute of Phosphate Research (independent state research agency).

General Public – reached through News Media

- Newspapers covering the assessment area and neighboring counties.
- Broadcast media, including local television affiliates for national networks, public television and local radio, especially news/talk and public radio stations.

Appendix A provides contact information for the organizations and media outlets listed above.

3.2 Communication Methods

Press Release: A press release will be prepared for distribution to news media and other interested parties listed in Appendix A. The release will be faxed or emailed three business days before the beginning of the flyovers and identify the EPA points of contact for more information. A copy of the Q&A sheet and map will be provided upon request.

Q&A Sheet: A sheet of information, up to two pages in length (one page front and back), will be prepared using a question and answer (Q&A) format. The front of the sheet will have questions and answers; the back will show the study area map and sources to contact for more information.

Meetings with State Agencies: EPA will meet with Florida DEP and DOH representatives about two weeks before the flyovers begin. The purpose of these meetings is to advise the DEP and DOH about the radiation assessment, flyover schedule, and communication activities planned in conjunction with the assessment.

Briefings with Congressional and State Legislators: The EPA Office of Congressional Affairs will contact federal and state elected officials representing communities in the radiation assessment area to inform them of the project and flyover schedule. The Q&A sheet will be provided.

Notification of Local Officials: About a week before the radiation assessment begins, the Q&A sheet will be mailed to local officials, emergency response agency directors, and industry groups identified in Appendix A. Follow-up phone calls and e-mail will be used to be sure that these officials received notice of the radiation assessment before it begins.

Notification of the Media: Press releases will be faxed or emailed to the media three business days before flyovers begin.

EPA Points of Contact: The primary EPA point of contact will be Brad Jackson, Remedial Project Manager, with support provided by L'Tonya Spencer, Community Involvement Coordinator. Brad's

and L'Tonya's names will appear on the Q&A sheet as the EPA contacts for more information. In addition, Dawn Harris, EPA Office of Public Affairs, will provide support with media inquiries; Dawn's name will be listed as the media point of contact on the press release. Christy Watkins, EPA Office of Congressional Affairs, will provide the Q&A sheet to the members of Congress for the radiation assessment area and handle requests for additional information.

Optional Activity—Radiation Assessment Link on EPA Web Page: If interest warrants, in the future, a link on the EPA web page would provide the Q&A sheet, photos and video of the assessment helicopter, as well as follow-up answers to questions about the project and additional links to general information on phosphate mining and potential exposures.

3.3 Content of Written Communications

Information about the pilot radiation assessment will be written in a concise, clear style without technical jargon. The Q&A sheet and the press release will contain the same basic content in different formats, and will be the primary means of explaining the purpose and approach to the pilot radiation assessment. The Q&A sheet and press release will cover the following items:

- Why is the EPA is conducting the survey?
- What areas will be assessed (simple map will be attached)?
- How and when will the assessment survey be done?
- What will people will see and hear during the assessment?
- How long will it take?
- What happens when the flyovers are complete?
- Who can I call for more information?

Appendix B provides drafts of the Q&A sheet and press release.

4.0 Implementation of Strategy

4.1 Action Items and Schedule

Preparation of Communication Strategy and Written Information

- Black & Veatch submits draft communication strategy, including draft Q&A sheet and press release, for internal review: **March 10**
- EPA provides comments on draft strategy to Black & Veatch: **March 15**
- B&V submits revised draft strategy, including revised draft Q&A sheet and press release, to EPA in final format: **March 18**
- EPA management and technical contractors review communication strategy/written information; comments due to Black & Veatch: **March 24**
- Final strategy, as well as final Q&A sheet and press release for public distribution due to EPA: **March 29**

Implementation Action Items

(Schedule assumes field mobilization for survey takes place one week before survey flights begin)

- RPM schedules meeting with FL DEP; target meeting date: two weeks before flyovers begin (**week of March 29**).
- Office of Congressional Liaison contacts federal and state elected officials: one week before flyovers begin (**week of April 5**).
- Q&A sheets (with map) mailed to designated groups: one week before flyovers begin (**week of April 5**).
- Press release faxed/e-mailed to designated media: three business days before flyovers begin (**April 9**)
- Follow-up phone calls and e-mails to key county and city officials: within three business days before flyovers begin (**April 9, 12, and 13**).
- Availability for media contacts and interviews: three business days before flyovers begin (**April 9**) and throughout assessment.

4.2 Responsibilities

Brad Jackson, RPM for the Central Florida Phosphate Pilot Study, will be the main point of contact for the project and will direct all activities of the EPA and the contractor project team. Black & Veatch will provide support for preparing the communication strategy, contact lists, written information, mailings and assisting, as requested by EPA, with follow-up calls and emails to community officials. Black & Veatch will coordinate with EPA's community involvement, public affairs, and congressional liaison staff in conducting these tasks. EPA will be responsible for releasing all information described in this strategy.

5.0 Follow-Up and Next Steps

The scope of this strategy does not recommend communication activities following completion of the radiation assessment. However, it is likely that the release of information and media coverage about the assessment will generate considerable public interest. Contacts can be expected from residents in the assessment area who are concerned about the implications of the radiation assessment; activist groups concerned about the environmental effects of phosphate mining; phosphate industry representatives; local and state officials; and other groups. EPA staff members need to be prepared to answer questions about where to get the assessment results, how to interpret the results, what follow-on actions EPA will take, and possible concerns that property owners and other community members may have if radiation is detected above background, particularly in residential areas.

Appendix A

Draft Contact List

Appendix B

Draft Q&A Sheet

Draft Press Release

Study Area Map